India in June this year. During his stay in Kathmandu, he had useful meetings on matters of mutual concern with His Majesty the King, Prime Minister K. P. Bhattarai Supreme Leader of the Nepali Congress Shri Ganesh Mansingh and with leaders of other important Nepalese political parties.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship remains the cornerstone of Indo-Nepal relations. As agreed upon in the Joint Communique issued at the end of Prime Minister Bhattarai's visit to India, comprehensive arrangements covering all aspects of bilateral relations, including trade and transit, will be taken up later. In the meanwhile, the two Prime Ministers had agreed to restore *status quo ante* to April 1, 1987. This has been done.

(d) These include strengthening of cooperation in the areas of vital concern to both countries, particularly in the sphere of industrial and human resource development, harnessing of the common water resources and for the common water resources and for the environment.

Setting up of a Postal Training Centre in Assam

*188. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a Postal Training Centre in Assam;

(b) if so, whether it is likely to be opened during the current financial year; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Considering the training needs and the staff strength of Assam and North Eastern Postal Circles, there is no justification for opening a Postal Training Centre in Assam, we have adequate capacity in Postal Training Centre, Darbanga.

Traffic handling by private sector at Major Ports

*189. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what was the comparative percentage of rise in the traffic handling by the major ports in the country during 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 till date;

(b) whether in view of the rising traffic, Government have considered the feasibility of private participation in the ports' operations; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof stating the areas in which private participation has been found feasible and the terms and conditions, if any, for such participation?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) The percentage increase during 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 over previous years was 8.2 per cent, 9.2 per cent and 0.2 per cent respectively. During the 1st four months of 1990-91 i.e., April-July, the increase in traffic is 5.5 per cent over the same period of last year.

(b) and (c) An Inter-Ministerial Group has been constituted to suggest measures for induction of private capital in Port Sector. The Group has issued a questionnaire to various interests including users of Ports to elicit their suggetions in this regard.